

## Boosting your Immune System

This time of year is prime for anyone to get a cold and or flu. Following are some tips to boost your immunity and foods that will help you get a head start on jumpstarting your immune system. They'll help you stay well in the first place.

1. Get enough ZZZs. You need 7 1/2 to 8 hours of shuteye. Every night!
2. Get enough vitamin D3. Take 1,000 IU a day; 1,200 after age 60.
3. Get your ahhhs. Both periods of big stress (e.g., the holidays) and quick hits (e.g., parking rage) take a toll. Carve out 10 minutes a day for meditation, deep breathing, and serene stretching. Don't let stress get the best of you.
4. Walk. It keeps your body humming and your head clear.
5. Eat and drink like a smart person. skinless white-meat chicken, ground turkey breast, tofu, fish, nuts, and beans are 5 foods which give you an edge.
6. Wash your hands. Scrub 100 times a day. Okay, 150.

**Cold and flu season is here**, but that doesn't mean you have to stock up on tissues and wait for symptoms to make you miserable. To keep fever, sneezing, runny nose, and other gnarly symptoms at bay, just do your daily 30-minute walk and chow down on these five foods to give your immune system a hefty boost.

1. Use the power of healthful protein. One of protein's many jobs is pumping up your ability to make disease-busting antibodies. Just steer clear of fatty red meats and full-fat dairy foods (they promote heart-hazardous inflammation). Pick up healthy-fat, high-protein foods, such as nonfat dairy, skinless white-meat chicken, ground turkey breast, tofu, fish, nuts, and beans.
2. Load up on colorful eats. Oranges, strawberries, bell peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, kiwifruit . . . all are loaded with vitamin C and flavonoids, which help your body churn out protective immune cells
3. Sip hot tea. People who drink 5 cups (about 3 mugs) of black tea daily produce 10 times more virus-fighting interferon than coffee drinkers.
4. Eat 100% whole-grain cereals. Oatmeal, shredded wheat, and other whole-grain cereals deliver three nutrients proved to enhance immunity: selenium, zinc, and beta glucan. Check out other foods that fight colds and flu.
5. Spice up your chicken soup. If you catch something anyway, chicken soup

shortens its duration by 50%. One theory about why (there are many): Cooked chicken releases cysteine, an amino acid that's chemically similar to acetylcysteine, a bronchitis drug. Up the soup's knockout punch to cold and flu bugs by tossing in infection-fighting garlic and hot red pepper, which contains capsaicin, a powerful decongestant. [Eating Well.com has a great recipe for chicken soup with dill](#) that takes only 20 min to make/50 min to cook (only modification is much less ginger than the recipe calls for).